

BOTHRIOCHLOA BLADHII (POACEAE) NEW TO LOUISIANA

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ABSTRACT

The occurrence of *Bothriochloa bladhii* is documented in Louisiana from Iberia, Tangipahoa, and Washington parishes.

KEY WORDS: Floristics, *Bothriochloa*, Poaceae, systematics, Louisiana.

Bothriochloa bladhii (Retz.) S.T. Blake, commonly called Australian blue-stem, is native to tropical-subtropical Africa, Asia, Australia, and islands of the Pacific (Blake 1969; Gould 1975). It was introduced into the New World as a forage grass (Gould 1975; 1979) and has become naturalized along roadsides in southern Texas (Gould 1975). The species is an excellent fodder grass in Australia (Blake 1944). *Bothriochloa bladhii* is not reported in Allen (1980), and MacRoberts (1988) stated that he "found no report of the species in Louisiana."

The first record for Louisiana is based on a collection in Iberia Parish, ca. 1 mile south of the Iberia Research Station, along a railroad right of way that parallels Louisiana Route 182, 20 November 1981 (*Saichuck s.n.* [LAF]). A second collection was made in Washington Parish, along Louisiana Highway

16, ca. 200 meters east of the Techefuncte River bridge near the Tangipahoa Parish line, 17 October 1986 (*L. Smith 1487* [LSU]). The latter specimen, however, was reported erroneously as *B. pertusa* (L.) A. Camus (McKenzie, *et al.* 1988). A third record for *B. bladhii* was collected on Lee Memorial Forest, Washington Parish, 13 September 1989 (*McKenzie 1070* with Lowell E. Urbatsch and Robert E. Noble [LSU]). A fourth collection was secured in Tangipahoa Parish, along Louisiana Highway 16, ca. 1 mile west of the parish line near the 1986 locality, 12 October 1989 (*McKenzie 1074* with Robert E. Noble: [FLAS, K, LSU, MO, NMCR, TAES]). A final collection was made on Lee Memorial Forest on 26 June 1990 (*McKenzie 1081* with Robert E. Noble [LSU]).

All specimens from Tangipahoa Parish and Washington Parish had spikelets that averaged smaller (ca. 3.2 mm) than typically reported for this species (3.5-4.0 mm, [Gould 1975]). These measurements may represent unusual variations in length as discussed by Blake (1944) or indicate that material from eastern Louisiana represents an introgressive hybrid between *Bothriochloa bladhii* and *Capillipedium parviflorum* (R. Br.) Stapf, as reported by Harlan, *et al.* (1958), de Wet, *et al.* (1961), and Blake (1969). The introduction of Australian bluestem in Louisiana appears to be unintentional, and Experiment Station personnel in Iberia and Washington parishes have no records of *B. bladhii* being introduced as a forage species.

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